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Proposed Skye City Centre development seeks approval - by Frank Picozzi

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Mayor Frank Picozzi

Already, the New Year is shaping up to carry forward the momentum of new development in and near City Centre Warwick (CCW), our community's premier, award-winning transit-oriented development concept. Owners of property that was home to Leviton Manufacturing for decades have announced their intention to seek planning board approval for a four-story, 248-unit apartment complex with space for retail operations and a restaurant on the first floor along busy Jefferson Blvd., one of the main thoroughfares of the CCW district.

The proposal is a shift from the original intent many years ago to house retail, residential and potential hotel uses on the property. The mill building itself was demolished shortly after the property was purchased by the present owner, and a second iteration of development, mostly focused on office space, was considered. With the COVID-19 pandemic necessitating a new focus on work from home and resulting in significantly decreased demand for office space, the most recent proposal aims to capitalize on the ever-growing demand for residential units.

The proposed development, dubbed "Skye City Centre" would also include an attached garage to accommodate 411 vehicles. The apartments would circle around courtyard-style space, featuring amenities like a swimming pool, a walking path, and pickle ball court. These features, along with other conveniences, are meant to attract a higher-income clientele than is projected for another development, "One Metro Center," which consists of more than 260 units, housed in three, four-story apartment buildings for which the developer has already received approvals.

Skye City Centre's units are proposed to be one and two bedrooms of varying dimensions: 22 one-bedroom units at 653 s/f, 39 at 902 s/f, and another 70 consisting of just over 750 s/f, with 66 two-bedroom units being offered at 1,066 s/f, 36 apartments at 1,143 s/f and the remaining 15 at 1,085 s/f.

The proposed development will be located just across the street from the InterLink intermodal train station, which offers MBTA commuter rail service and directly connects to Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport via a skywalk over Post Rd. Additionally, Jefferson Blvd. offers a direct connection to I-95—all of which should be an added benefit to attract prospective tenants. Total project cost is reportedly estimated between \$75 and \$90 million. If all municipal approvals are granted, construction could begin as early as this summer.

This is just the latest housing development project being proposed in the city. In recent months, the community has seen a variety of proposals that will increase Warwick's housing stock and hotel offerings: WoodSprings Suites Extended Stay Hotel, 75 townhouse and single-family dwellings now under construction in City Centre, 238 apartment units that have been approved and will be housed in a former Sheraton hotel right near the airport, and 200 units proposed along Post Rd. This is in addition to a plan to construct 39 single-family dwellings on the former site of the John Wickes Elementary School, which was recently sold by the city to a private developer through a competitive RFP/bid process.

If you're interested in development opportunities in Warwick, or would just like to learn more about our community, please call the Department of Economic Development at (401) 738-2014, email con.dir@warwickri.com, or visit warwickri.gov and citycentrewarwick.com.

Frank Picozzi is the mayor of the city of Warwick, R.I.

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